# Medieval Occupation at The Orchard, Brighthampton

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SUMMARY

*Excavations at The Orchard, Brighthampton, revealed traces of a possible medieval timber hall, with a complex of associated rubbish pits, dating from the late 11th through the 13th century, when the site was abandoned and a soil formed. Later dumped deposits, possibly floors or levelling layers, date to the post-medieval period. The range of artefacts and ecofacts recovered allows the reconstruction of a fairly detailed picture of medieval activity on the site, although little structural detail can be supplied. Iron smithing was certainly represented, although no smithing features were located. Waste products indicate the local rearing and butchery of animals (mainly cattle) for meat and the processing of arable crops.*

This report describes the results of the excavation of 0.6 ha. of land at The Orchard, Brighthampton, Standlake, Oxfordshire (Fig. 1). Planning permission (app. no. W98/1633) had been granted to Bower Mapson by the West Oxfordshire District Council for the construction of six detached dwellings with garages, access road, car parking and landscaping, subject to a condition requiring archaeological investigation. The site comprised a rectangular plot of land to the south of the A415 (Abingdon to Witney road) close to the centre of Brighthampton (SP38450355), at *c.* 67 m. above Ordnance Datum. Geological maps[1] indicate that the underlying geology is First Terrace Gravel overlying Oxford Clay.

The villages of Standlake and Brighthampton are surrounded by cropmarks, some of which are likely to relate to Bronze Age activity. Two major barrow cemeteries are recorded in the area. Previous excavations to the south of the site had produced 14 burials with grave goods dating to the Anglo-Saxon period. The village of Brighthampton developed in a linear fashion in the medieval period, as can be seen from documentary references, early maps, and some of the existing buildings fronting the east-to-west road (in particular, the buildings known as The Smithy and Glebe Barn).

A field evaluation, comprising six trenches, was carried out by Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd (TVAS) in May 1999.[2] The trenches, each 1.5 m. wide, varied in length between 12 m. and 20 m. (total area 139 m.$^2$) (Fig. 2). A number of substantial features including ditches, pits and a probable building fronting the road were discovered. These all appeared to date between the 11th and 14th centuries.

[1] BGS, *British Geological Survey* (1979), Sheet 236.

[2] G. Hull, 'The Orchard, Brighthampton, Standlake, Oxfordshire, archaeological evaluation' (Thames Valley Archaeol. Services report, 1999).

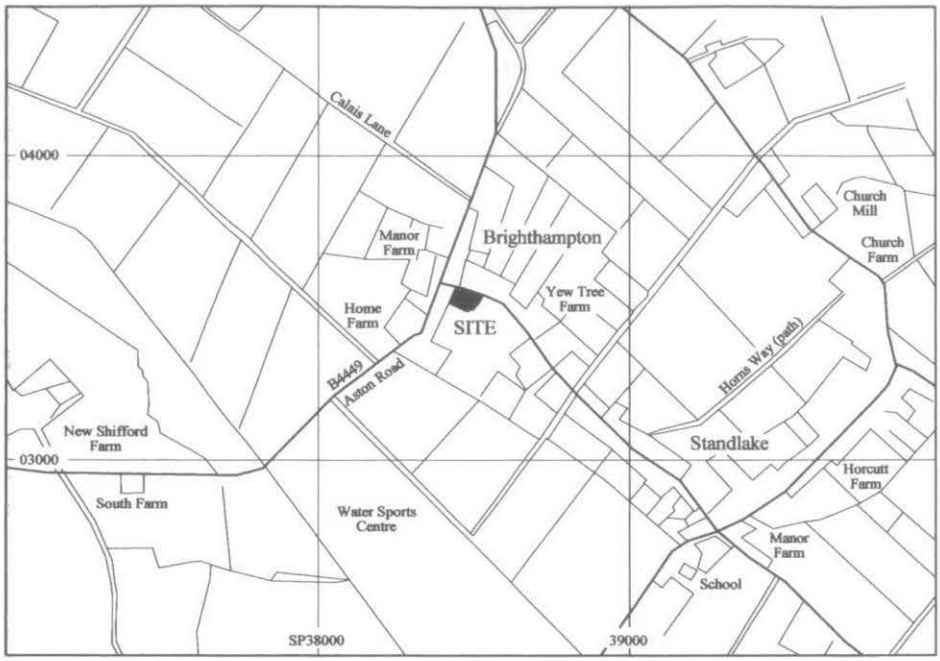


Fig. 1. Location of site within Brighthampton.

The subsequent excavation was also conducted by TVAS, following a specification approved by Hugh Coddington, Deputy County Archaeological Officer with Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services, and supervised by the first author during August 2000. Excavation and post-excavation analysis were funded by Bower Mapson.

The excavation consisted of three areas (A–C; *c.* 630 m.$^2$ in total), corresponding to the areas where the evaluation had revealed the majority of the archaeology (Fig. 2). Area A, closest to the road frontage (*c.* 231 m.$^2$), contained most of the archaeological features and the deepest stratification. Area B (126 m.$^2$) was extensively disturbed by modern works and almost devoid of archaeological features. Area C (185 m.$^2$), to the rear of the plot, contained numerous discrete archaeological features, including Building A, but with little stratigraphy. A watching brief was maintained over the rest of the development, during which only one feature of archaeological interest (pit 4000) was recorded.

The archive will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museums Service. The site code is OBH99/08 and the Museum accession code is OXCMS 1999.89.

## RESULTS (Figs. 3-7)

Features excavated were mainly medieval pits. Pottery was not abundant, only 18 contexts producing 20 or more sherds, and only one producing over 100 sherds. However, around 100 stratified contexts produced at least one sherd, and almost 1,600 sherds came from the site in total. Animal bone was ubiquitous, again mainly in tiny quantities in individual contexts, although several pits produced 100 fragments or more. Over 1,200 bone fragments in total were recovered from around 100 stratified contexts; the sieved material added remarkably little to this collection. Other finds were few, aside from small metal objects including one decorative copper-alloy strap distributor.

Phasing has been assigned to most of the features excavated. In most cases a combination of relative stratigraphic position and pottery dating has produced tight phasing, although with the possibility of considerable overlap in date between phases. Ceramic phases have been translated directly into site phases, albeit several features contained only residual pottery and have been phased later than the date of their

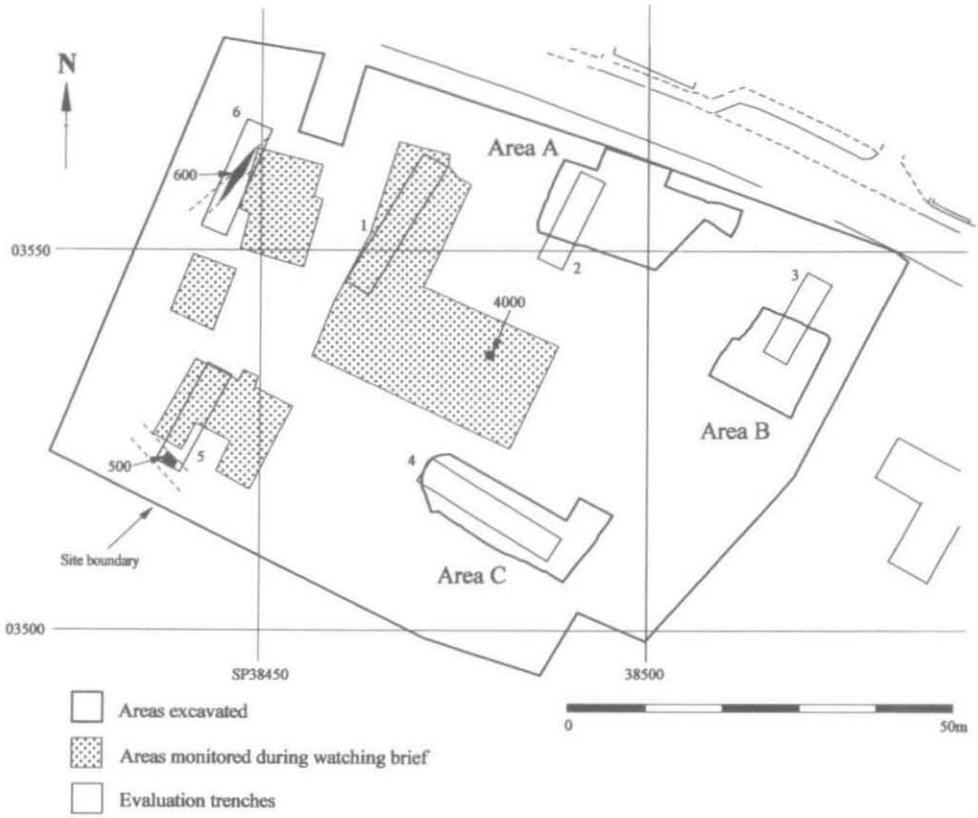


Fig. 2. Areas investigated.

pottery, on stratigraphic grounds. It should also be admitted that the absolute dating offered for each phase is based on relatively small amounts of dating evidence throughout the sequence, and thus individual feature dates are not necessarily as secure as they might appear.

*Prehistoric and Roman*

Prehistoric and Roman activity is represented only indirectly through three undiagnostic worked flints and a small amount of residual pottery, mainly in Area C. The Roman material could have been introduced onto the site at any time from the Roman period onwards and need not indicate Roman occupation, although it is unlikely to have travelled very far and thus suggests some Roman activity in the vicinity.

*Saxon*

Again, there was a small amount of Saxon material on the site, but all associated with pottery that either clearly was, or could be, later, and no features could be positively assigned a date in this period (see Phase 1).

*Phase 1: 11th–12th century (Figs. 3 and 5)*

Features of Phase 1 included pits, possibly a ditch (1020), a tentatively identified building, and an isolated posthole (2000). The presence of a small number of Saxon pottery sherds on the site suggests some activity of this period in the vicinity, but no features of definitively Saxon date could be identified, this material being in all cases associated with pottery that could continue at least into the 12th century. Still, although not conclusively proven, it is possible that at least some of the activity in Phase 1 could pre-date the Norman conquest. If so, the nature of the site shows no sign of change. The majority of the pits had been disturbed by later pit-digging. Most, therefore, had only shallow surviving depths, under 0.30 m., only 1041 (1.33 m.) and 4000 (1 m.) exceeding this depth. Finds from this phase were correspondingly rare, amounting to little more than a handful of pottery sherds and small amounts of bone from any one feature, although pits 1112 and

2006 also produced iron slag. Other pits assigned to this phase, on ceramic or stratigraphic grounds, include 1023, 1033, 1114, 1120, 2003, 3011 and 3018.

Ditch 1020 may be a predecessor of ditch 104 in the next phase, parallel to the road, but too little of it was recovered for certainty. Apart from the fact that it underlies Phase 2 features, it cannot be dated.

A number of undated postholes in Area C can be construed as forming Building A (Fig. 6). Only 3018 contained any dating evidence, a single tiny sherd of pottery, which could easily be residual but which, if taken at face value, could date the building to this phase. It must be admitted that this 'building' is only tentatively identified, but it appears to have been a hall form, 9.7 m. long and 5.4 m. wide, possibly with an apsidal western end and perhaps with a doorway in the short east end wall. No floors or hearths, nor any other internal features, were identified. The south wall is represented by many more posts than the north wall, and there is no convincing explanation for why this should be so, other than, possibly, selective rebuilding of this wall alone. It is possible, therefore, that the 'south wall' was actually a fence and the other posts were unrelated. However, the fact that all the pits in Area C avoided the position of Building A does suggest that some structure stood here, possibly throughout the occupation of this part of the site. Alternative, much less substantial structures, can also be conceived of amongst the postholes here.

Recorded as a pit, 3029 (Area C) could conceivably be construed as a sunken-featured building (SFB). Its shape (sub-rectangular) and dimensions, at 2.25 m. by 1.82 m., were certainly comparable to smaller examples of this type, and posthole 3030 was in a characteristically axial position in relation to it, although 3030 has been assigned here to Building A. However, 3029 was very shallow (0.19 m.) and its pottery too late for the usual date range of such buildings (although examples as late as the late 11th century have been found, e.g., in London,[3] they have tended to be both larger and more elaborate). It is interesting, however, that 3029 contained some residual Roman pottery (fairly commonly encountered in early–middle Saxon contexts and particularly in SFBs). It is possible that at least some of the material filling this 'pit' was deposited immediately prior to construction of Building A, to level the ground alongside what would be the building's entrance, and that 3029 could have been a considerably earlier feature; but it would be rash on present evidence to hold this as an example of continuity of settlement from Saxon to Norman times.

*Phase 2: 12th century (Fig. 3)*

This phase, too, was dominated by pits, although there were features that probably represented ditches. Most features were, again, considerably truncated. The Phase 2 pits contained slightly more finds than those of Phase 1, generally with more pottery, increased animal bone, and some slag, but other types of finds remained rare.

Phase 2 pits were mainly very shallow, although most were more extensive in plan than the Phase 1 examples. Pit 1042 was over 1 m. deep and had six fills, although the layers recorded as its upper fills (1150–1153) were uncharacteristically horizontal and may in fact have been layers of road make-up and even surfacing (Fig. 7, Sections 1 and 2). In particular, 1150 consisted primarily of gravel and 1151 crushed limestone with gravel, while the sandy 1152–3 could have been levelling. However, these layers did not survive sufficiently in plan to allow a proper assessment of their extent and nature, having been cut away by ditch 103 (segment 1039). Beyond these, other pits include 400, 1018, 1021, 1024–5, 1103, 1115 and 2004.

Quarry 3035 in Area C was the largest feature on site, being at least 7.40 m. by 5.60 m. and up to 1.40 m. deep (Fig. 7, Section 3). This was excavated by means of a slot across it. Given the paucity of finds from such a large volume, it can only be supposed that this was a gravel extraction pit, and it may be tempting to relate it to the episodes of possible road surfacing at the north edge of the site. Several smaller (undated) features (3000, 3001–2, 3025) were subsequently cut into the fills around the edge of the resulting large depression. If Building A actually existed in Phase 1, it may also be significant to note that quarry 3035 also respected its position, suggesting the building may still have been standing in Phase 2. Other undated features in Area C may also belong to this phase (e.g. 3003-4, 3016, 3021, etc.).

Ditch 104 was probably dug in Phase 2 for roadside drainage and filled in during Phase 3, although segment 1038 contained only Phase 1 pottery, perhaps disturbed from undated ditch 1020 below it. Ditch 104 was heavily truncated, so that less than half of its profile remained, but it would seem to have been V-shaped, perhaps originally 1 m. wide and 0.75 m. deep, aligned parallel to the road. No trace of it was found east of where it would have been truncated by the mass of pits, so it is possible that it terminated around this point. Any potential continuation of the line eastwards would have been wholly lost below another pit cluster (1118, etc.). The posited gap in the ditch at this point would have created an access route off the road and such a spot would perhaps have been the natural choice as the location for domestic rubbish pits, which in all periods show a marked clustering here.

[3] *The Archaeology of Greater London* (Museum of London Archaeol. Service Mono. 2000), 200-6; V. Horsman, C. Milne and G. Milne, *Aspects of Saxo-Norman London, I: Building and Street Development near Billingsgate and Cheapside* (London & Middx Archaeol. Soc. Spec. Paper 11, 1988).

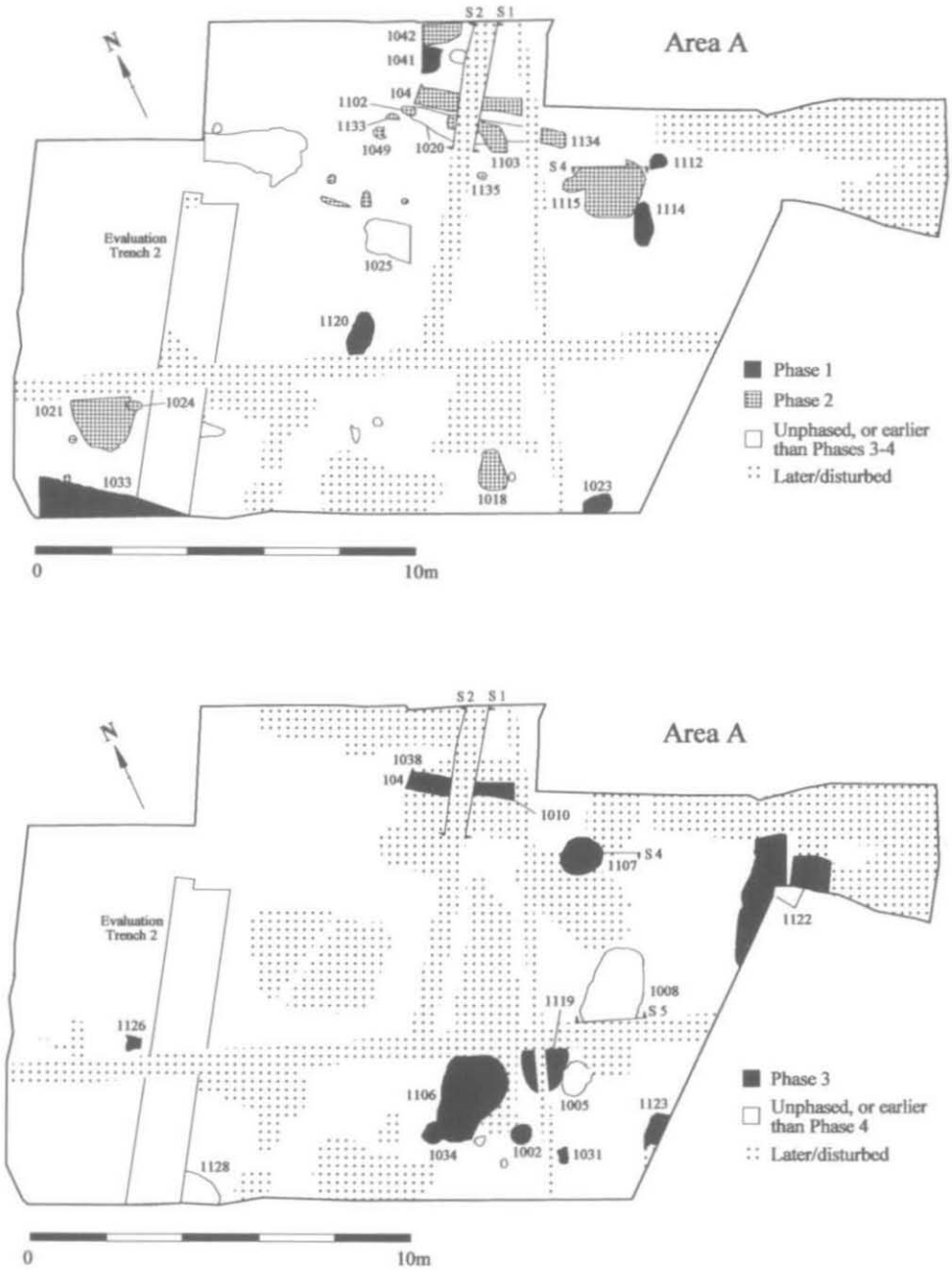


Fig. 3. Area A, Phases 1 and 2 (upper), Phase 3 (lower).

Two ditches (500, 600) excavated in the evaluation trenches, but in areas not explored in the excavation (see Fig. 2), could represent land divisions forming a rectangular enclosure around the occupied area. If these were contemporary (and the meagre pottery would suggest 600 may have been earlier, although both could still have been backfilled in the 12th century), they could have enclosed an area some 60 m. back from the road and at least as wide. However, too little of these features was traced to be certain they were even associated.

*Phase 3: Later 12th–13th century (Figs. 3 and 5)*

Phase 3 still consisted mainly of pits. Finds from this period were marginally more numerous than before. The tiny quantities of Roman pottery (along with one fragment of Roman tile) residual in medieval pits, suggest the disturbance of some Roman feature, but whether on the site or not could not be determined.

The pits of this phase were generally much larger than earlier examples, many having surface dimensions above 1 m. across, and commonly over 0.60 m. deep, but this probably reflects the lesser truncation of the later features as much as any change in deposition practice. As in previous phases, all the pits tended to be cut into prevous pits rather than into fresh ground, suggesting pressure on space, especially at the front of the plot. Back from the road, in Area B, although the evidence is limited it is possible that pit digging now expanded into a new area. At the very rear of the plot, next to the area occupied by Building A, another very large pit (3040, 4.60 m. by 1 m. and 1.40 m. deep) was cut into the top of quarry 3035. The full list of pits for this phase also includes 1005, 1008, 1034, 1107, 1119, 1122–3, 1126, 1128 and 2005.

In spite of the size of the features of this phase, they still contained relatively few finds other than ceramics. Most of the fills, as was the case for most of the site's features, consisted of soft brown sand, sometimes with a more pronounced clay content, and rare pea grit inclusions. Occasionally, small quantities of charcoal darkened the colouring but this was notably rare. Clearly the inhabitants were not disposing of much durable material culture amongst their organic refuse and even animal bone waste was thinly distributed.

A partial exception to this lack of finds is pit 1107 (Fig. 7, Section 4), which contained most of the skeleton of a horse, although almost nothing else (a little iron slag and 19 sherds of pottery). Horse carcasses seem to have been consistently treated differently from other animal remains, as commonly observed elsewhere.

Pit 2005 was a large shallow feature against the edge of Area B. It had been considerably disturbed, not least by animal burrowing. In addition to its 51 sherds of pottery of ceramic Phase 3, it also produced a silver penny of Edward III (1344-51). This, the only coin from the site, came from the top of the fill against the edge of the excavated slot in a disturbed area, so its provenance is not considered sufficiently secure to overrule the dating derived from the pottery. However, it should serve as a cautionary note that these relatively small ceramic assemblages, especially when, as here, composed of small, abraded sherds, can only ever provide *termini post quos* and occupation (or at least activity) on the site may indeed have extended into the middle of the 14th century.

Hearth 1036, a small bowl-shaped cut just south of the main cluster of pits, had intense scorching on the base of the cut and was filled with dark red sand at base, giving way to less discoloured fills above. This feature contained only a tiny scrap of bone so, beyond its clearly having been the seat of a fire, a more precise function cannot be assigned. This hearth cannot have been earlier than Phase 3 on stratigraphic grounds and could have been later.

*Phase 4: Mid–late 13th century (Figs. 4 and 5)*

Phase 4 saw the most intensive use of the site, again mainly for rubbish-pit digging, but now there is more evidence of land division within the plot in the form of ditches. It is conceivable that Building A in Area C, although undated, may have lasted into this phase. At the northern end of Area A, alongside the present road, ditch 103 replaced 104 for roadside drainage. If the relatively compact gravel layers capping pit 1042 (Phase 2), cut by the construction of ditch 103, did represent road surface, this suggests that the line (or at least the width) of the road was being modified in this period.

Ditch 103 (1039, 1110, 1121, 1127) was V-shaped, probably originally 2–3 m. wide and survived to a depth of 1 m. in slot 1039, although only around 0.6–0.7 m. in the other slots. It was badly truncated by later cuts, and itself cut ditch 104. The dating of ditch 103 is something of a problem, each separate slot across it (1039, 1110, 1121, 1127) not only yielding differently-dated pottery, but also providing slightly contradictory stratigraphic data. The most satisfactory solution is probably to place it in Phase 4, perhaps late in the phase, although this leaves the stratigraphy of segment 1110 problematical, as two of the features above it (1131, 1108) had Phase 3 pottery, which must therefore be considered residual. In addition, there was some significantly late material in 1121, which must be contamination.

Shallow ditch 102 (1013, 1124, 1125) also paralleled the road at the front of the site, but was set further back. It seems likely to have been contemporary with ditch 105, which represented an extension southwards (almost at right angles to 102). They were similar in profile and all the fills were identical brown gritty sand, although 102 was somewhat wider and deeper than 105. Ditch 105's fill produced later pottery (Phase 4 from segment 1011, although ceramic Phase 2 from 1012) than 102 (ceramic Phase 2 in 1013, and Phase 3 in 1124),

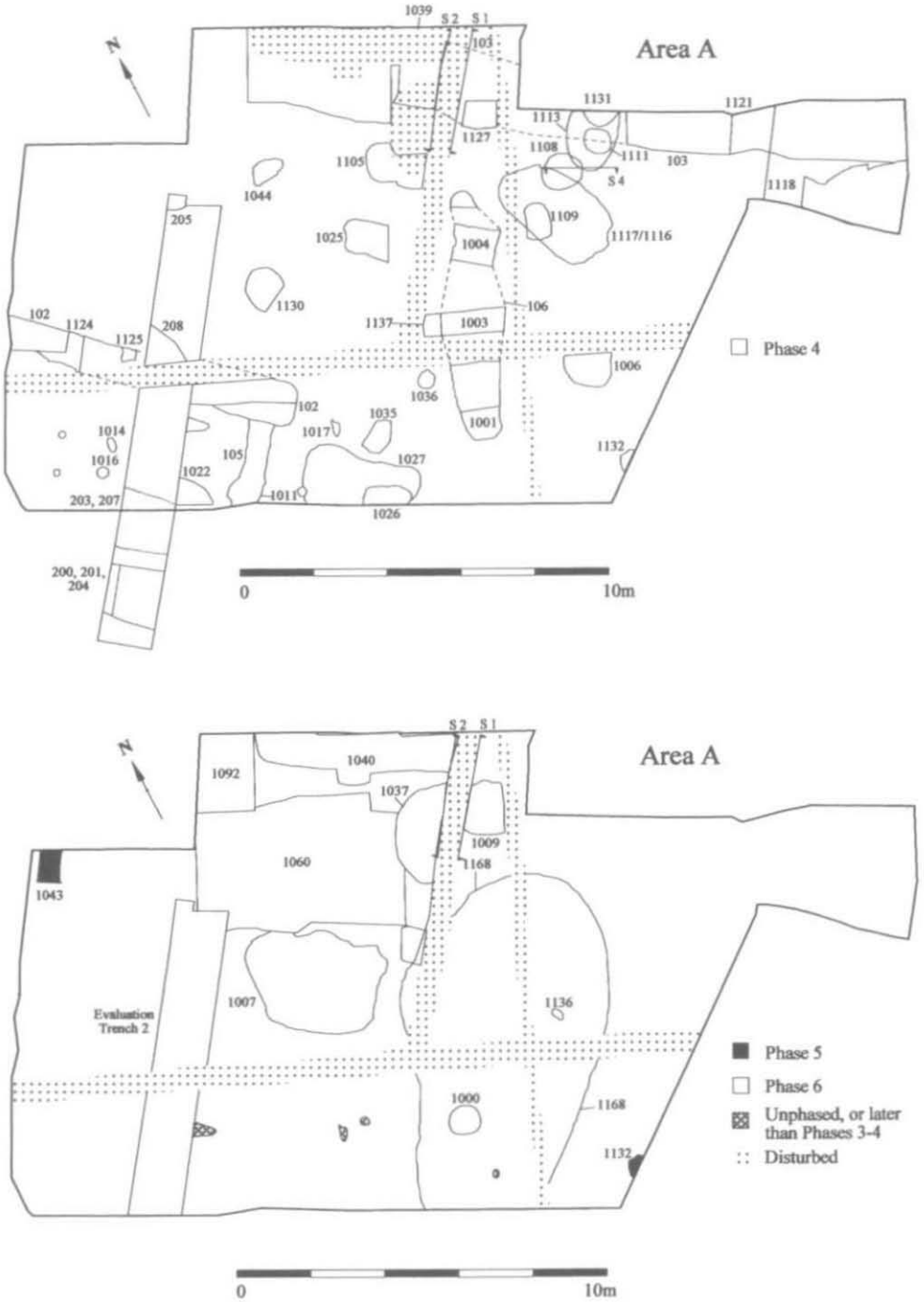


Fig. 4. Area A, Phase 4 (upper), Phases 5 and 6 (lower).

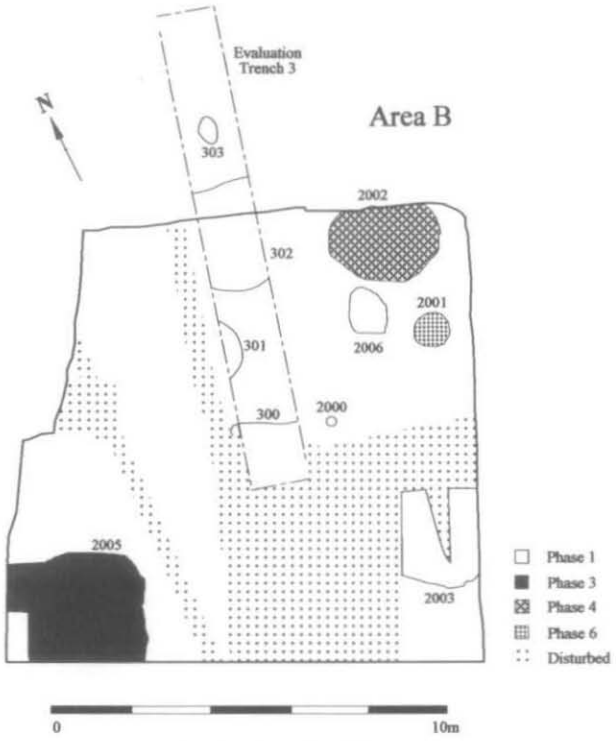


Fig. 5. Area B, all features.

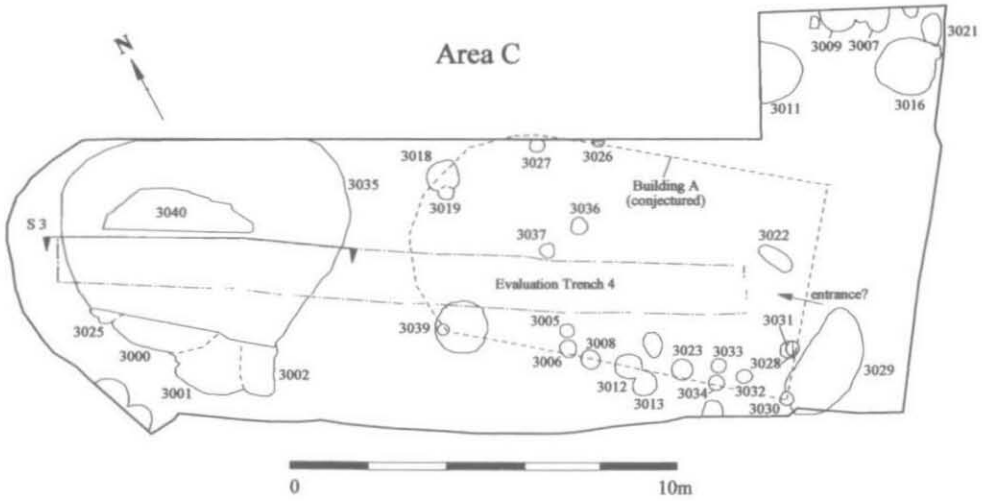


Fig. 6. Area C, all features.

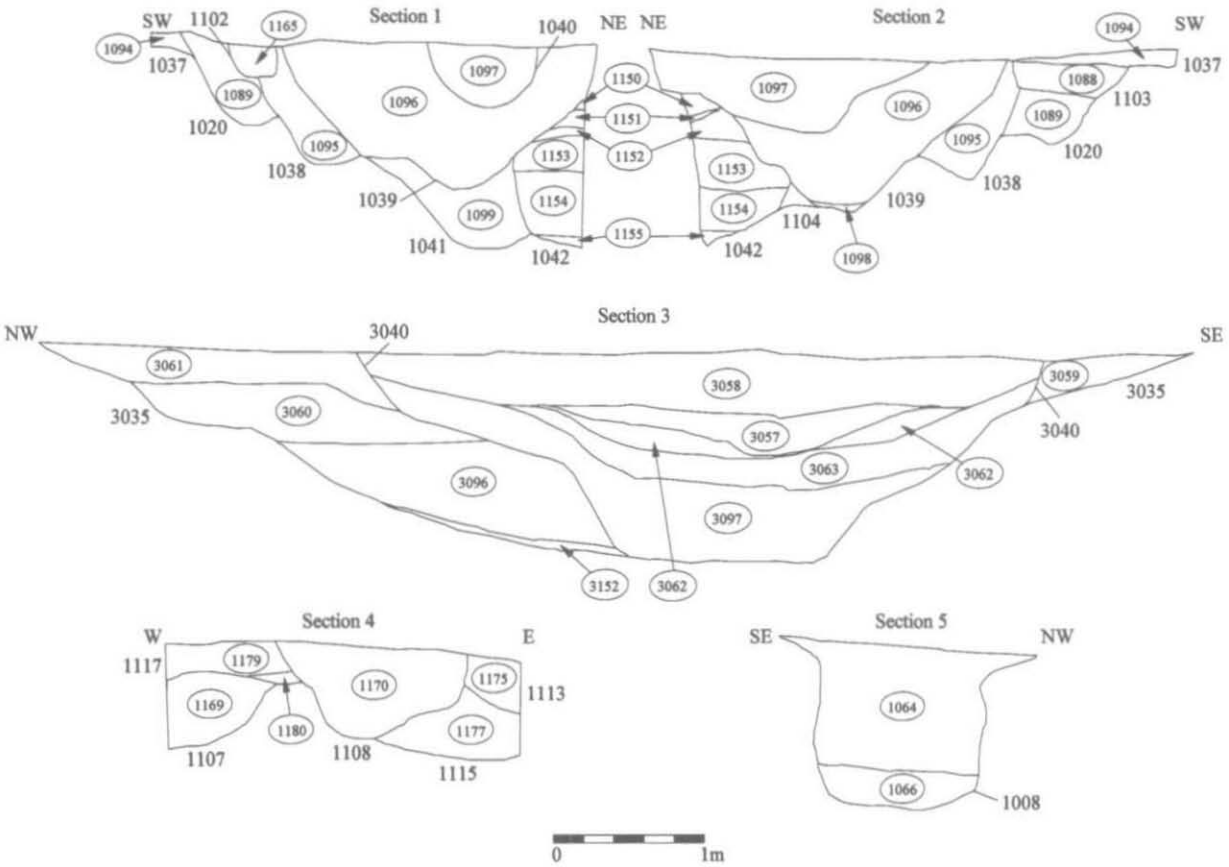


Fig. 7. Selected sections.

but as ditch 102 produced only a handful of sherds in total and as segment 1125 cut Phase 3 pit 1126, the earlier finds may be considered residual. At the point of the junction, 1013 may represent a separate pit or a slight blurring of the two ditch profiles. Ditch 102 itself was over 1 m. wide, but no more than 0.29 m. deep and shallow in profile.

Ditch 106 was aligned N.-S., towards the west edge of the site. Both terminals were located, giving a length of only 6.85 m. This ditch had a V-shaped profile and was 0.50 m. deep at its deepest point and up to 1.70 m. wide. Its purpose is unclear; it may have been a drain rather than a boundary. Its fills contained a variety of material, including pottery that appears to give differing dates to different segments, but it is simplest to accept its latest date (ceramic Phase 4, from segment 1003).

The apparent expansion in the number of pits may be artificial, as many of these features are really dated no better than 'probably Phase 4' or 'Phase 4 or later' on stratigraphic grounds. Pit 1113 produced little dating evidence, but did contain four smithing hearth bottoms. In most respects (dimensions, fills, types of finds assemblages), this group of pits is identical to those of Phase 3. Pits dated to this phase include 200, 204, 207, 230, 1006, 1014, 1016–17, 1022, 1035, 1105, 1108–9, 1111, 1113, 1116–8, 1121, 1130 and 1132.

Hearth 1044 was similar to hearth 1036 in the previous phase, being a slightly larger (0.75 m. diameter) bowl-shaped cut filled with 1157, a gritty sand burnt to a dark red/black containing small limestone lumps. Containing a single pot sherd and a tiny amount of animal bone, it provided little clue as to its function.

A similar burnt feature was 1026, except that the fill was blue-black sand with red flecking, much charcoal, and some ash and burnt limestone. It contained no artefacts, but the sample of fill analysed produced a concentration of plant remains (see below).

*Phase 5: Later medieval (Fig. 4)*

Only two features can be unequivocally assigned to this phase. Gully 1043 was only 0.55 m. wide and 0.19 m. deep. Too little of it was observed (most of it will have lain outside the area excavated) to assess its function. Small pit 1132's dating rests on a single sherd of pottery, but there is no reason to contradict it. Ditch segment 1039 (ditch 103), which also contained some ceramic Phase 5 pottery, certainly needs to be dated earlier than this; some intrusion or contamination must be posited.

*Phase 6: Post-medieval and modern (Figs. 4 and 5)*

The site was considerably affected by early modern and modern ground disturbance, as shown on the plans. Ditch 1040 (18th century) and associated gravel floor layer 1060 (containing most of the site's metal finds) were clearly post-medieval. This means that the buried soil 1092 (below 1060) formed at some point between the abandonment of the medieval occupation and the 18th century. Several features contained post-medieval pottery, mainly from the 18th century. A single sherd of china from pit 1119, however, is clearly intrusive alongside a good group (98 sherds) of ceramic Phase 3. As there were no structural elements associated with layer 1060, it is less likely to have been a floor and so must be interpreted as an exterior surface running up to the roadside.

## FINDS

*Pottery by JANE TIMBY*

The excavation resulted in the recovery of some 1,573 sherds of pottery weighing 160.5 kg. The bulk of the assemblage dates to the medieval period accompanied by a small quantity of Roman, late Saxon and post-medieval material. Much of the pottery was recovered from pits, with lesser amounts from postholes and ditches.

The condition of the material was very variable, reflected in an overall average sherd weight of just 10 gm., which is quite low for medieval pottery. Some groups comprised well-broken, fairly abraded sherds, whilst others contained large fresh pieces, in some cases several joining sherds from the same vessels.

The pottery was sorted into fabrics based on the main inclusions macroscopically visible in the clay body. Where possible these were coded using the Oxford medieval fabric series.[4] The pottery was quantified by sherd count, weight and estimated vessel equivalents (eve) for each recorded context. The full data are deposited with the site archive.

[4] Cf. R. Haldon and M. Mellor, 'The Saxon and Medieval Pottery', in B. Durham, 'Archaeological Investigations in St. Aldates, Oxford', *Oxoniensia*, xlii (1977), 113-19, 137-9; M. Mellor, 'Oxfordshire Pottery: a synthesis of middle and late Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval pottery in the Oxford region', *Oxoniensia*, lix (1994), 17-217, for detailed descriptions.

TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF THE SAXON AND MEDIEVAL FABRICS

| *Fabric* | *Description* | *No.* | *%* | *Wt (gm.)* | *%* | *Eve* | *%* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SXQTZ | Handmade quartz sand | 1 | * | 4 | * | 2 | * |
| SXSH | Handmade coarse fossil shell | 2 | * | 10 | * | 0 | 0 |
| OXB | Late Saxon Oxford shelly ware | 28 | 2 | 210 | 1 | 27 | 3 |
| OXR | St Neot's type | 5 | * | 37 | * | 7 | * |
| OXY | Oxford medieval sandy ware | 67 | 4.5 | 536 | 3.5 | 15 | 2 |
| OXAC | Cotswold oolitic ware | 587 | 39 | 6910 | 44.5 | 376 | 44.5 |
| OXAE | Sandy ware, occasional flint | 12 | * | 100 | * | 5 | * |
| OXAG? | Late Saxon–Med Abingdon ware | 3 | * | 41 | * | 0 | 0 |
| OXAJ | Kennet Valley (Newbury type B) | 210 | 14 | 1842 | 12 | 62 | 7.5 |
| OXAM | Brill-Boarstall type | 169 | 11 | 870 | 5.5 | 64 | 7.5 |
| OXAQ | Savernake/E Wilts type | 134 | 9 | 1232 | 8 | 61 | 7 |
| OXBB | Minety ware | 162 | 11 | 2270 | 14.5 | 141 | 17 |
| OXBF | Late Saxon–Med SW Oxon ware | 29 | 2 | 358 | 2 | 5 | * |
| OXBJ | Kennet Valley (Newbury type A) | 25 | 1.5 | 265 | 1.5 | 19 | 2 |
| OXCX | Wychwood ware (NE Oxon) | 8 | * | 34 | * | 0 | 0 |
| ABA | Abingdon sandy ware | 2 | * | 20 | * | 0 | 0 |
| OX162 | S E Oxon sandy ware | 4 | * | 24 | * | 7 | * |
| WA38? | Wallingford ware | 1 | * | 8 | * | 0 | 0 |
| BATH A | Bath fabric A | 3 | * | 9 | * | 0 | 0 |
| MED1 | Miscellaneous shell | 2 | * | 48 | * | 8 | * |
| MED2 | Sand and oolitic limestone | 5 | * | 57 | * | 6 | * |
| MED3 | Miscellaneous other sandy | 21 | 1.5 | 143 | 1 | 5 | * |
| MED4 | Miscellaneous other calcareous | 22 | 1.5 | 380 | 2.5 | 32 | 4 |
| SYHBW | Surrey–Hampshire border ware | 1 | * | 26 | * | 0 | 0 |
| MISC | Miscellaneous | 8 | * | 60 | * | 0 | 0 |
| *Total* | | *1511* | | *15494* | | *842* | |

* = less than 1%

*Roman*

At least 11 sherds of Roman date were present, mainly local (Oxfordshire) grey wares (from pits 3029 and 3040, the soil (1092) below floor 1060 and surface collection). One neck from a south-west white-slipped flask came from pit 3029. In all cases the material was redeposited.

*Late Saxon-medieval*

The pottery suggests that there was some activity in the locality during the 10th century or slightly earlier, but the earliest groups would suggest that the excavated features largely date from the 11th to 12th century through to the later 13th to 14th century. A small scatter of material hints at late Saxon occupation in the locality, although most of the material appears to be residual in later deposits. Two handmade sherds, one containing ill-sorted rounded quartz, the other coarse fossil-shell, are potentially the earliest Saxon pieces, although difficult to date closely. These came from soil 1092 and surface collection. Of late Saxon origin are sherds in shelly fabric (OXB), St. Neot's type ware (OXR) and other undesignated shelly fabrics (MED1). Fabric OXB mainly featured as small jars with rounded rims, with examples from pits 1115, 1119 and 400, and ditch 500. The main rim type recognized in St. Neot's ware was the triangular-rimmed bowl (Fig. 8.1) although jar body sherds were also present. Bowl rimsherds were present in pits 1112 and 1115 and the surface material. Three sherds of the micaceous sandy ware equivalent to Bath fabric A[5] were noted. This first appears from the 11th century.

The assemblage is very much dominated by sherds of Cotswold oolitic-limestone-tempered ware (OXAC), which accounts for 39% by vessel count (44.5% by weight and eve). This mainly features as jars, cooking pots and dishes. The earliest evidence for this tradition is from the 9th century at Fairford, Gloucestershire.[6] The co-existence of fabrics OXB and OXAC has been observed on late Saxon sites.[7] It is common on Gloucestershire sites from the early 11th century, but is not reliably documented in Oxford until after the mid 11th century.[8] It continues to dominate assemblages in these areas throughout the 12th century and into the early 13th.

The majority of the other wares appear to be well known local types from the Glocestershire/Oxfordshire/Wiltshire region supplemented in the 13th century by vessels, mainly jugs, from the Brill-Boarstall kilns, Buckinghamshire. Fabrics moderately well represented in the assemblage include Minety ware (OXBB) from North Wiltshire (accounting for 11% by sherd count), Oxford sandy ware (OXY) (4.5%), Kennet Valley ware (OXAJ) (14%), East Wiltshire ware (OXAQ) (9%) and Brill-Boarstall wares (OXAM) (11%).

The assemblage is thus very much dominated by local wares with a domestic function. Jar and cooking pots are the commonest forms, supplemented by large shallow dishes and pitchers. Decorated sherds of particular note include a sherd of roller-stamped Minety ware from surface collection, an OXBB pitcher with a decorated rim (Fig. 8.6), two pieces of OXAJ from pits 1107 and 1115 decorated with diagonal lines and stabs (cf. Fig. 8.5), and two sherds of OXAJ with wavy combing from layer 1092 and unstratified. No spouts were found and there is only one example of a vessel with applied thumb-strips.

Many of the vessels show evidence of use through sooting. Several of the calcareous-tempered wares have leached interior walls and there are a number of pieces with internal calcareous deposits on the inner walls.

High quality table wares, although present, are not common overall, being mainly represented by the Brill-Boarstall jugs. The only other regional imports are a single sherd from a Surrey glazed jug recovered from the top of pit 1118 and possibly a sandy ware with a light-green glaze from pit 1008.

The assemblage was sorted into six ceramic phases on the basis of the presence or absence of certain wares, independent of the stratigraphy. With a large number of very small groups and clear evidence of residuality and possible contamination of deposits, along with a paucity of stratigraphic relationships to test the sequence, such an exercise is fraught with problems.

The earliest ceramic phase (CP1) was distinguished by the presence of Cotswold oolitic ware (OXAC), late Saxon sherds and flint-tempered fabric OXBF. Both the latter fabrics were in circulation by the early 11th century, continuing throughout the 12th, only to start fading away in the 13th century. Fourteen features fell into this group on the basis of the pottery; however, ten of these contained less than five sherds, which cannot really be considered a reliable sample. The exceptions are ditch 600 and pits 2006, 3029 and 4000. Pit 3029 produced an early OXAC jar (Fig 8.4) but the largest group came from 4000, which comprised various OXAC jars.

[5] A.G. Vince, 'Late Saxon and Medieval Pottery in Gloucestershire', in A. Saville (ed.), *Archaeology in Gloucestershire* (1984), 262.

[6] Mellor (1994), op. cit. note 4, p.51.

[7] Cf. Haldon and Mellor (1977), op. cit. note 4.

[8] Ibid.

Ceramic phase 2 (CP2) is characterized by the appearance of Minety ware (OXBB), Oxford sandy ware (OXY) and East Wiltshire wares (OXAQ) alongside the CP1 fabrics. These new fabrics are in circulation from the 12th century. Fifteen features fall into this category, of which seven produced five or less sherds. This leaves ditch 1001, gully 1012 and pits 1016, 1024, 1115, 2004 and 3035. Pits 1016 and 1024 produced several sherds from single vessels, an OXBB cooking pot from the former (Fig. 8.14) and an OXBB tripod pitcher from the latter. Pit 1115 produced a moderately good group of 78 sherds with various jars, dishes, bowls and pitcher (Fig. 8.2–3). The largest group of material came from pit 2004, including several plain jars (OXAC, OXAQ, OXY), some with thumb-pressed rims, dishes (OXAC), and spouted tripod pitchers (OXY, OXBB) (Fig. 9.8–13). The OXY example was partially glazed, with applied thumbed strips.

Ceramic phase 3 (CP3), dating from the later 12th century, sees the appearance of fabric OXAJ, a flint-, sand- and limestone-tempered ware equivalent to Newbury fabric type B.[9] This is the second commonest fabric present on the site, accounting for 14% by sherd count (12% by weight). At least 20 features can be placed in this phase in terms of fabric occurrence, of which 12 yielded in excess of five sherds (posthole 1002, ditches 1004 and 1010, and pits 1005, 1008, 1107–8, 1113, 1116, 1119, 2005 and 3040). Particularly large groups came from pits 1008 and 1119, with 99 and 116 sherds respectively. Pit 1008 contained few featured sherds and the material is generally fairly well broken with an average sherd size of 10 gm. Some of the sherds were clearly redeposited. Indeed, this feature was stratigraphically above ditch 103, whose dating, although problematical, appears to lie in Phase 4, making 1108's pottery residual. The material from pit 1119 is slightly better preserved, with an average sherd size of 13 gm. A number of featured sherds are present including jars/cooking pots with thumbed rims (OXAC (Fig. 8.7), OXBF, MED4), a spouted pitcher (OXBB) (Fig. 8.6) and at least one dish (OXAC). A single piece of modern china in this group is presumed to be intrusive.

Ceramic phase 4 (CP4) is marked by the appearance of glazed jug sherds from the Brill-Boarstall kilns, which start to appear across Oxfordshire from the mid 13th century.[10] At least 20 features fall into this group, of which half produced less than six sherds. The better groups came from pits 200, 207, 1006, 1014, 1017, 1035, 1105, 1118 and 1130, and gully 1011. Of particular note are several sherds from a single biconical, decorated jug (Fig. 9.16) from pit 1014 and a large jar (OXAC) from pit 1006 (Fig. 8.15). A further joining sherd came from surface collection.

Ceramic phase 5 (CP5) loosely dates to the later medieval period. As most of the groups placed here only have single sherds potentially of this date, largely later Brill wares, alongside earlier material, its designation is uncertain. Features falling into this category include ditches 1039 and 1043, and pit 1132.

Ceramic phase 6 (CP6) includes features dating to the post-medieval period. A small group of 44 sherds (534 gm.) of post-medieval material is present, recovered from a variety of contexts across the site. Most of the pieces appear to be of 18th-century date. A small group from ditch 1040, comprising salt-glazed whiteware, a slip-decorated dish, glazed red earthenware and white china, suggests an 18th-century date for this feature. Sherds of 18th-century Nottinghamshire stoneware were recovered from pit 1000 and hollow 1007. Other features producing post-medieval sherds include pits 1119 (?intrusive) and 2001.

*Catalogue of illustrated material*

Fig. 8

1. Bowl with a sooted exterior body below the rim. Fabric OXR. Pit 1115 (1117).
2. Dish. Fabric OXAC. Pit 1115 (1177).
3. Handmade jar, wheel/turntable finished with a thumbed rim. Fabric OXAC. Pit 1115 (1117).
4. Simple rim jar, handmade with a wheel-turned rim. Fabric OXAC. Pit 3029 (3090).
5. Bodysherd, orientation uncertain, probably from a spouted pitcher. Decorated with incised parallel lines with stab marks. Fabric OXAJ. Pit 1107 (1169).
6. Tripod or spouted pitcher with a slightly collared neck. Decorated with round punch marks on the upper rim surface. Fabric OXBB. Pit 1119 (1193).
7. Handmade cooking pot with a sooted exterior body below the shoulder carination. Fabric OXAC. Pit 1119 (1193).
8. Handmade cooking pot with a sooted lower exterior body. Surface inclusions on the internal walls have leached out. Fabric OXAC. Pit 2004 (2054).
9. Dark grey-black, handmade jar. Fabric OXAC. Pit 2004 (2054).
10. Shallow dish with a red-brown interior and blackened exterior. Fabric OXAC. Pit 2004 (2054).
11. Grey cooking-pot with external sooting. Fabric OXY. Pit 2004 (2054).

[9] A.G. Vince, S.J. Lobb, J.C. Richards and L. Mepham, *Excavations in Newbury 1979–1990* (Wessex Archaeol. Rep. 13, 1997).

[10] Mellor (1994), op. cit. note 4, p.140.

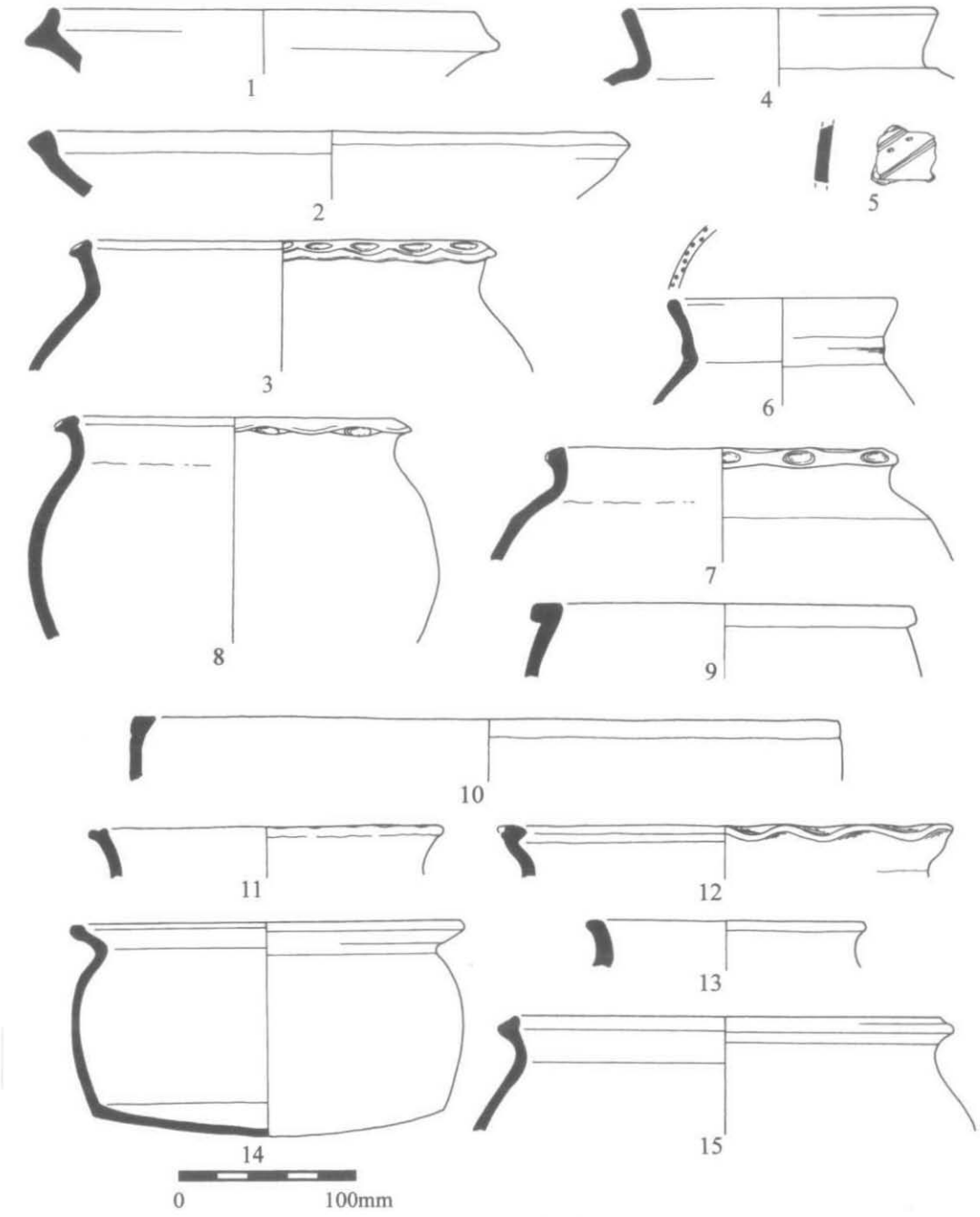


Fig. 8. Medieval ceramics (see text for list of illustrated sherds).

12. Handmade jar with thumb-pressed rim. Fabric OXAQ. Pit 2004 (2054).
13. Handmade, simple everted rim jar. Fabric OXAC. Pit 2004 (2054).
14. Cooking-pot with a sooted exterior base and leached interior surface. Handmade with a wheel-finished upper body/rim. Fabric OXBB. Pit 1016 (1076).
15. Large jar, orange-brown in colour with a grey core. Fabric OXAC. Pit 1006 (1062).

Figure 9

16. Biconical jug with a partial green glaze over the central body. Decorated on the upper zone with vertical applied strips of iron-rich clay on a white clay body. Strap handle with diagonal slashes. Fabric OXAM. Pit 1014 (1074).

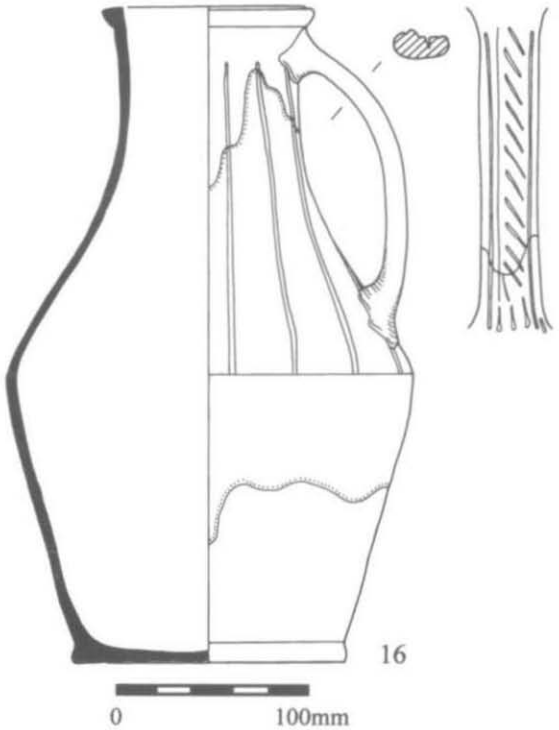


Fig. 9. Biconical jug, fabric OXAM, pit 1014.

*Animal bones by KEVIN RIELLY*

The bones were recovered by hand as well as through a fairly extensive sieving programme. In general, the various assemblages are in a good state of preservation with minimal fragmentation. Exceptions are the horse skull and mandible fragments from the Phase 3 pit fills (see below). There are no weathered bones, although from the high quantity of dog-chewed fragments it is evident that this material had been left on the surface for some time prior to eventual burial. Dog chewing was more common amongst the horse bones, perhaps indicative of the manner of deposition of the horses in comparison to the other domestic species.

The ageing methods employed are tooth eruption and wear[11] and epiphyses fusion. Each of these provides data listed according to a number of age groups, and the ages for these are taken from Amorosi and

[11] Following A. Grant, 'The use of toothwear as a guide to the age of domestic ungulates', in B. Wilson, C. Grigson and S. Payne (eds.), *Ageing and Sexing Animal Bones from Archaeological Sites* (BAR 109, 1982), 91-108.

Schmid.[12] The measurements taken all follow von den Driesch,[13] while withers height estimates are based on the work of von den Driesch and Boessneck.[14] Full discussion of the use of animals, and size and type/breed of domesticates is available in the archive.

Comparisons between the phases were often difficult due to the small quantities of information available. In order to improve matters, the age data was amalgamated within the early medieval phases to form Phases 1+2 and 3+4.

TABLE 2. SPECIES REPRESENTATION (HAND COLLECTED)

| *Phase:* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *3/4* | *4* | *5* | *6* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Species | | | | | | | |
| Cattle | 13 | 41 | 65 | | 29 | 3 | 7 |
| Horse | | 5 | 42 | | 40 | | 1 |
| Cattle-size | 20 | 13 | 63 | | 48 | 1 | 6 |
| Sheep/goat | 17 | 20 | 46 | 2 | 21 | 1 | 7 |
| Sheep | | 4 | 4 | | 3 | | 1 |
| Pig | 7 | 8 | 13 | | 7 | 2 | 2 |
| Sheep-size | 6 | 20 | 35 | 1 | 15 | 1 | 10 |
| Red deer | | | 1 | | | | |
| Dog | | 1 | | | | | |
| Cat | 1 | | | | | | |
| Chicken | | 2 | 2 | | | | |
| Chicken-size | | | 1 | | | | |
| Goose | | | 2 | | 2 | | |
| Teal | | | | | | | 1 |
| *Total* | *64* | *114* | *275* | *3* | *165* | *8* | *35* |

*Phase 1 (11th–12th centuries)*

Small collections of bones (no more than 20 fragments in each deposit) were recovered from a series of pit and ditch fills; the majority from the pits. The bones featured a mixture of skeletal parts, largely identified to cattle and sheep/goat, with a lesser amount of pig and cat (Tables 2 and 3). Sheep/goat have been combined due to the difficulty of identification of these species. There is, however, within this and later phases, a small number that could be identified as sheep. For convenience, hereafter, the combined species will be referred to as sheep. Of interest amongst the pig bones is a relatively complete upper toothrow of a large boar, which displays a healed fracture above (on the lateral surface), and adjacent to, the canine tooth (tusk). As pigs use these teeth to grub up roots and also to fight with, it can be supposed that the damage may have occurred during one or other of these activities.

[12] T. Amorosi, *A Postcranial Guide to Domestic Neo-natal and Juvenile Mammals* (BAR 533, 1989); E. Schmid, *Atlas of Animal Bones* (1972).

[13] A. von den Driesch, *A Guide to the Measurement of Animal Bones from Archaeological Sites* (Peabody Museum Bulletin 1, 1976).

[14] A. von den Driesch and J.A. Boessneck, 'Kritische ammerkungen zur widerristhohenberechnung aus langenmassen vor-und fruhgeschichtlicher tierknochen', *Saugetierkundliche Mitteilungen*, 22 (1974), 325-48.

TABLE 3. SPECIES REPRESENTATION (SIEVED)

| *Phase:* | *1* | *2* | *3* | *3/4* | *4* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Species: | | | | | |
| Cattle | | | 2 | | 2 |
| Horse | | | 2 | | 25 |
| Cattle-size | | 3 | 6 | | 1 |
| Sheep/Goat | 1 | | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| Pig | | | 1 | | 3 |
| Sheep-size | | 6 | 10 | | 1 |
| Cat | 1 | | | | |
| Goose | | | | | 1 |
| Chicken | | 1 | | | |
| *Total* | *2* | *10* | *24* | *1* | *35* |

*Phase 2 (12th century)*

This phase provided one of the larger assemblages, with the great majority of the bones arising from pit fills. The quantities of bones within individual fills were again relatively small, the two largest assemblages provided by pit fills 1177 (pit 1115) and 2054 (pit 2004) with 35 and 26 bones respectively. The species diversity is somewhat broader than shown by Phase 1, with horse, dog and chicken added to the three major domesticates. There is, however, a similar dominance of cattle and sheep/goat, and these are again represented by a wide range of skeletal parts. The meat use of the major domesticates is shown here, as elsewhere within the site assemblage, by the presence of cut marks on the meat-bearing parts of the skeleton. Similar butchery was noticed on one of the Phase 2 horse bones, a pelvis with both cleaver and knife cuts; these probably represent jointing and defleshing marks respectively. This evidence clearly shows that, at least during this phase, horses were exploited for their meat.

*Phase 3 (Late 12th–13th centuries)*

The bones dated to this phase were provided by another series of pits (plus ditches and one posthole), these amounting to the largest of the phased assemblages. This phase also produced some of the larger single assemblages, most notably from 1064 (pit 1008) with 59 bones, 1169 (pit 1107) with 72 bones, and 3058 (pit 3040) with 52 bones. The latter pit (3040) provided a combined total from five fills of 65 fragments. The overall assemblage is similar to that described from Phase 2, with the exclusion of dog and the addition of red deer and goose.

Horse is particularly well represented in this phase, the majority arising from a partial skeleton from 1169 (pit 1107), including the majority of skeletal parts, with the exception of the head. This animal was fully adult, at least 4 years of age, and stood about 12 hands at the shoulder. It would appear that this animal was disarticulated when found. While this may suggest a possible meat use for the carcass (and see evidence of butchery in Phase 2), it is perhaps more likely that disarticulation occurred through the action of scavengers. A noticeably high proportion of these bones had been gnawed. Other horse remains within this phase included one possible case of butchery/working and two pathological examples. The former consisted of a mandible that has been deliberately punctured through the lateral (outer) surface of the ascending ramus (the posterior half of the bone behind the toothrow). This was achieved by repeated blows using the tip of a sharp knife. Such a method would suggest that it took place after the meat was removed. Hence the suggestion above of a possible working interpretation for this puncture, this bone perhaps representing a practice piece. Alternatively, there is evidence for the use of cattle as well as horse mandibles as sledge-runners,[15] although none of the examples cited had a perforated ascending ramus.

[15] See A. MacGregor, *Bone, Antler, Ivory and Horn* (1985), 145.

The two pathological horse cases include a maxilla with a large destructive lesion in the roof of the mouth adjacent to the second and third premolars, i.e. between the front two cheekteeth, and a scapula with heavy deposits of coarse woven bone, mainly on the medial (inner) surface of the blade. Each of these can be related to an ongoing infection and it is possible, though they are from different fills, that they could represent the same individual. This animal was clearly a sub-adult, the retention of the milk teeth and non-eruption of the third adult molar suggesting an age between 2 and 3 years.

*Phase 4 (Mid 13th–14th centuries)*

The bones from this phase were recovered from a slightly greater range of features including pit fills, ditch and gully fills, and one hearth deposit. Most of the bones were recovered from the pits, although there was one large assemblage from a ditch fill. This phase provided the second largest assemblage as well as some of the larger individual bone collections. Many of the fragments were taken from just two deposits, 1062 (pit 1006) and 1187 (segment 1121 of ditch 103), with 48 and 43 bones respectively. Unlike earlier phases, the sieved assemblage was relatively substantial, this recovered from four samples, all pit fills, with the great majority (31 bones) from 1062 (pit 1006). Following the Phase 3 assemblage, there is a good representation of cattle, horse and sheep/goat. It should be mentioned that horse is probably over-represented, with a large proportion of the total being skull fragments and loose teeth from 1062. A large proportion of the remaining horse bones were recovered from ditch fill 1187, this comprising the disarticulated remains, right foreleg, vertebrae and ribs, of a single individual. This was somewhat larger than the Phase 3 animal, standing about 13 hands at the shoulder. The other species represented in this phase are pig and goose.

*Phase 5 (Later medieval)*

The penultimate phase provided the smallest assemblage, with just eight bones taken from two ditch fills. Within a small collection of major domesticates, there was a humerus from an infant calf. This had clearly been butchered, a chop through the middle of the shaft, which would suggest that this bone may represent the remains of a veal calf.

*Phase 6 (Post-medieval)*

A relatively small collection of bones was taken from a variety of cut features and one layer. This last deposit 1092, a buried soil, provided most of the post-medieval assemblage, a total of 25 fragments. The overall assemblage was largely composed of the major domesticates, including horse. In addition, there was a single fragment of teal, this constituting, alongside the red deer bone from Phase 3, the total quantity of wild game bones recovered at this site.

*Conclusions: Early medieval*

The great majority of the site assemblage was recovered from deposits, mainly pit fills, dating between the 11th and 14th centuries (Phases 1 to 4). It is interesting that pits were used for refuse disposal, which is reminiscent of an urban site where space is limited in relation to the defined property boundaries. It could be that similar constraints were in operation within this area of occupation. There are some differences between the phases, with perhaps the main differences being the obviously larger quantity of bones recovered from the later two phases, related as much to the lesser degree of truncation of later features as to a greater intensity of activity in the later phases.

The assemblages are largely composed of the major domesticates, which can be equated with food waste. With all parts of the carcasses represented, it can be assumed that processing took place locally, possibly within individual households. The meat requirements of the local populace, perhaps in conjunction with the availability of stock, were clearly biased towards cattle and sheep. There were other food species present, but these were all rather poorly represented. The possible exception here is horse, although it would seem that the abundance of horse bones cannot be directly related to its importance as a food animal. It is suggested that most of the horses were disposed of as whole carcasses, based on the presence of articulations and the poor representation of butchered bones.

There is some evidence for the status of the local population. A small collection of very young cattle, sheep and pig, strongly suggests local production. From this evidence, it is possible that the site may represent the remains of a farm. Conversely, such production may have supplemented other means of income. It is noticeable that the cattle were all sub-adult or within the prime beef age. Such an age structure can more easily be associated with a consumer rather than a production site.

*Metalwork by NICOLA POWELL*

A total of 18 pieces of metalwork was recovered during the fieldwork, all but three from the excavation, one piece was recovered during the watching brief. The assemblage comprises 15 pieces of iron, two of copper alloy and one of lead (see Table 4). Notable pieces are described below.

TABLE 4. METALWORK

| *Cut* | *Deposit* | *Feature type* | *Phase* | *Material* | *Type* | *Length (mm.)* | *Breadth (mm.)* | *Thickness (mm.)* | *Comment/Date* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 262 | Subsoil | 6 | Fe | Nail | 30 | 4 | 2 | head damaged, poor condition |
| | 351 | Undefined | - | Fe | Nail stem | 34 | 5 | 4 | head lost, very poor condition |
| | 1060 | Floor | 6 | Fe | Nail | 54 | 4 | 3 | T-shaped, ?Roman |
| | 1060 | Floor | 6 | CuA | Buckle | 48 | 29 | 2 | D-shaped |
| | 1060 | Floor | 6 | Pb | Sheet | | | | cut piece |
| | 1060 | Floor | 6 | Fe | Nail | 66 | 4 | 5 | round, slight domed head |
| 1007 | 1063 | Hollow | 6 | Fe | Strap fitting | 180 | 29 | 2 | two nails in place |
| 1007 | 1063 | Hollow | 6 | Fe | Buckle | 57 | 40 | 5 | Post-medieval |
| | 1092 | Subsoil | 5-6 | Fe | ? | 84 | 6 | 5 | tapers |
| | 1092 | Subsoil | 5-6 | Fe | Point | 94 | 8 | 7 | tapers |
| 1040 | 1097 | Ditch | 6 | Fe | Knife | 91 | | | tang and part of blade, post-medieval |
| 1110 | 1172 | Ditch | 4 | Fe | Staple | | | | |
| 1113 | 1175 | Pit | 4 | Fe | Nail stem | 49 | 5 | 5 | very corroded, head lost |
| 1115 | 1177 | Pit | 2 | Fe | Nail head/stud | | | | very corroded |
| 1119 | 1193 | Pit | 3 | Fe | ? | 75 | 9 | 3 | |
| 3040 | 3058 | Pit | 3 | Cu A | Strap distributor | 36dia | | | wheel-like with stylised face at hub, Viking/medieval |
| 3040 | 3097 | Pit | 3 | Fe | Point | 75 | 5 | 5 | tapers |
| 4000 | 4051 | Undefined | - | Fe | Knife frag. | 34 | 19 | 2 | fragment of blade |

*Iron*

Two pieces of ironwork from hollow 1007 (1063) are notable. One is a complete iron buckle with a central bar. It is rectangular and curved and appears to comprise two parts, one on top of the other. There are also remains of the central pin *in situ*. It is post-medieval in date. A strip of iron with two nails or rivets in place may be the remains of a strap piece. It has one curved end and the other is broken off through a nail hole. It may have bounded a chest or box or formed part of some door furniture.

*Copper alloy*

A strap distributor (Fig. 10) was found in pit 3040 (3058). It is 36 mm. in diameter, with a circular cross-section and takes the form of a three-spoked wheel. At the hub of the wheel and continuing along the three spokes are the features of a stylised human or animal face. The strap distributor is in very good condition, with no signs of corrosion. It was subject to qualitative X-ray fluorescence (XRF) at the National Museums of Scotland, indicating that the alloy was a leaded brass (detail in archive). This relatively unusual alloy implies a Roman or later date; it seems to have been most extensively used in the Viking period.[16] Strap distributors are common finds from the Iron Age onwards. Also known as strap buckles, strap unions and strap junctions, they served to allow harness straps to cross at right angles. The strap distributor from Brighthampton could have formed part of horse harness, such as the cheek-piece, although such pieces were also used on belts to facilitate the fixing of attachments such as swords. Wear from the strapping can be seen on the rim of the example from Brighthampton. The closest parallel of Viking Age date appears to be a strap distributor from the Isle of Man.[17] It was found in a grave at Cronk Moar and, although in very poor condition, it still has two clasps and a buckle attached. This example has a globule of plain glass at the centre, although Bersu and Wilson note animal heads are occasionally found in the equivalent position amongst strap distributors in the Scandinavian corpus.[18]

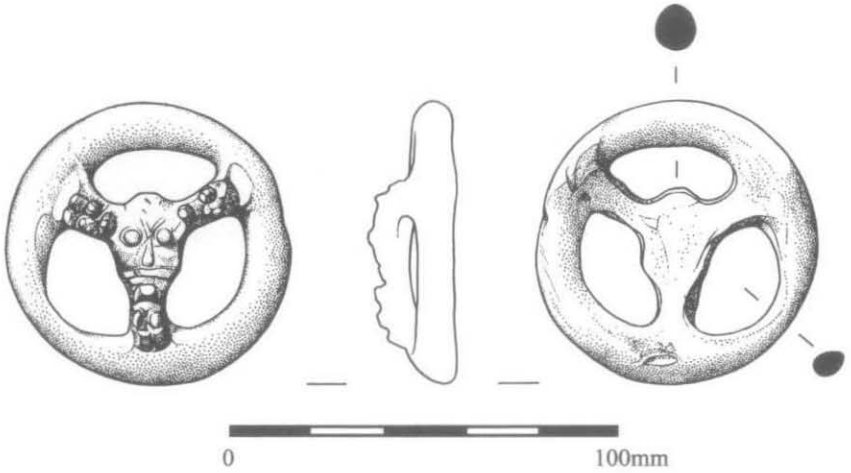


Figure 10. Copper-alloy strap distributor from pit 3040 (3058).

16 Fraser Hunter pers. comm.

17 G. Bersu and D.M. Wilson, *Three Viking Graves in the Isle of Man* (Soc. Medieval Archaeol. Mono. 1, 1966), 72-5; Arthur MacGregor pers. comm.

18 Bersu and Wilson, op. cit. note 17.

*Iron slag by LYNNE KEYS*

A little over 3.2 kg. of iron slag was recovered from the excavations. This consisted mainly of undiagnostic slags and smithing hearth bottoms. The latter is the most characteristic slag produced by smithing: its plano-convex-shape was formed as the iron silicate material created by high temperature reactions between the iron, iron-scale and silica, from either a clay furnace lining or the silica flux used by the smith, dripped down into the hearth base to form a slag. If not cleared out this developed into the smithing hearth bottom.

Table 5 lists the diagnostic slag and undiagnostic slag with notable features. Much of the undiagnostic slag was so designated because it consisted of small, shattered fragments, but it too was probably generated by smithing activity as some appear to be pieces of broken smithing hearth bottoms. The greatest amount came from contexts of the 12th century, particularly the later part of the century. One pit (1113) contained several smithing hearth bottoms.

None of the slags was found in a context that could be construed as a location of iron-working activity, rather it came from the fills of pits, ditches and other cut features. Smiths almost invariably exploited any features open at the time of their activity, dumping their slag into those. Before this happened the slags may have been left for a time close to the forge, possibly kicked about and broken, but eventually they were gathered up and thrown into open features. The absence of hammerscale from the soil adhering to the slags and their broken state implies the latter may have been the case. The slag represents a brief period of smithing some time in the later 12th century or just after, but the location of this activity was not discovered.

TABLE 5. CATALOGUE OF SLAG

| *Cut* | *Deposit* | *Slag identification* | *Weight (gm.)* | *Length (mm.)* | *Breadth (mm.)* | *Depth (mm.)* | *Comment* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 500 | 552 | Undiagnostic | 2 | | | | Iron rich |
| 1005 | 1061 | Undiagnostic | 12 | | | | Broken smithing slag? |
| 1017 | 1082 | Undiagnostic | 136 | | | | Part of smithing hearth bottom |
| 1040 | 1097 | Undiagnostic | 84 | | | | Prob. using coal |
| 1060 | | Vitrified hearth lining | 1 | | | | |
| 1110 | 1172 | Undiagnostic | 106 | | | | Smithing slag? |
| 1112 | 1174 | Undiagnostic | 40 | | | | Very dense |
| 1113 | 1175 | Smithing hearth bottom | 750 | 110 | 95 | 75 | |
| 1113 | 1175 | Smithing hearth bottom | 86 | 75 | 50 | 25 | |
| 1113 | 1175 | Smithing hearth bottom | 168 | 75 | 60 | 30 | |
| 1113 | 1175 | Smithing hearth bottom | 460 | 90 | 70 | 65 | |
| 1115 | 1171 | Smithing hearth bottom | 134 | 60 | 40 | 30 | Half |
| 1115 | 1177 | Undiagnostic | 164 | | | | Parts of smithing hearth bottoms? |
| 2006 | 2058 | Smithing hearth bottom | 172 | 80 | 65 | 20 | |
| Surface cleaning | | Smithing hearth bottom | 88 | 60 | 40 | 15 | |

TABLE 6. CHARRED PLANT REMAINS

| *Sample* | | *18* | *21* | *23* | *24* | *27* | *32* | *33* | *34* | *37* | *38* | *39* | *44* | *47* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Context* | | *3090* | *3083* | *1062* | *1051* | *1081* | *1084* | *1161* | *1064* | *1099* | *1193* | *1192* | *1165* | *3058* |
| *Feature* | | *3029* | *3023* | *1006* | *1106* | *1021* | *1026* | *1005* | *1008* | *1041* | *1119* | *1119* | *1102* | *3040* |
| *Sample volume (litres)* | | *10* | *10* | *30* | *10* | *30* | *5* | *30* | *30* | *30* | *10* | *10* | *25* | *10* |
| CEREAL GRAIN | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| *Triticum* sp.– short free-threshing grain | rivet or bread wheat | 2 | 2 | 22 | 7 | - | 2 | 9 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 23 | 6 | 2 |
| *Triticum* sp. | wheat | - | - | 2 | 1 | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | 2 | 2 | - | - |
| *Hordeum* sp.- hulled | hulled barley | - | - | 2 | - | - | 14 | - | 3 | - | 3 | 4 | - | - |
| *Hordeum* sp. | barley | - | - | - | - | - | 5 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| *Avena* sp. | oats | - | - | - | 1 | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | 3 | - | - |
| cereal indet. | | 6 | 3 | 10 | 15 | 1 | 15 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 26 | 31 | 4 | 1 |
| CHAFF | | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| OTHER FOOD PLANTS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| *Vicia faba* | field bean | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - |
| *Vicia* or *Pisum* sp. | bean, fodder vetch or pea- | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - |
| WEED SEEDS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| *Silene* sp. | campion sp. | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| *Chenopodium album* | fat hen | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| *Medicago lupulina* | black medick | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| *cf. M. lupulina* | black medick | - | - | - | - | - | 10 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| *Vicia* or *Lathyrus* sp. | vetch or tare | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - |
| *Rumex* sp. | dock | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Lithospermum arvense* | corn gromwell | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| *Anthemis cotula* | stinking mayweed | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| *Bromus S. Eubromus* sp. | brome grass | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Gramineae indet | grass | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| weed indet. | | - | - | 1 | - | - | 13 | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - |
| CHARCOAL | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| *Prunus* sp. | sloe, plum, etc. | - | - | + | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| *Quercus* sp. | oak | - | - | - | - | - | - | + | - | - | + | - | - | - |
| *TOTAL ITEMS (excluding charcoal)* | | *8* | *5* | *37* | *25* | *1* | *80* | *19* | *13* | *3* | *38* | *65* | *11* | *3* |

Number of contexts sampled 47; total volume 390 (litres); number of samples with seeds, etc. 13; number of samples with charcoal 3

*Charred plant remains by MARK ROBINSON*

Samples, each of 5–30 litres, were taken from 47 archaeological contexts and floated onto a 0.3 mm. mesh to recover charred remains. The dried flots were sorted under a binocular microscope and the remains identified. The results are given in Table 6 for those samples containing seeds, etc. or charcoal.

Remains were only present in less than a quarter of the samples and the concentration of remains was generally low. Unusually, charcoal was almost entirely absent. With the exception of Sample 32 from hearth 1026, the non-charcoal remains were dominated by cereal grain and there were very few weed seeds. The grain was mostly free-threshing *Triticum* sp. (rivet or bread-type wheat) although some hulled *Hordeum* sp. (hulled barley) and a few *Avena* sp. (oats) were also present. Sample 38 from Phase 3 pit 1119 contained, in addition, a couple of examples of *Vicia faba* (field bean). These remains perhaps represented the accidental charring of grain that was being dried to harden it before grinding. It is very likely that the remains in those samples with low concentrations of remains had been re-worked from richer deposits.

Sample 32 from context 1084, an ash spread in cut 1026, had a somewhat different origin, from an earlier stage of crop processing. Almost half the remains were seeds of arable weeds, particularly *Medicago lupulina* (black medick). In contrast with the other samples, the cereal remains were mostly grains of hulled *Hordeum* sp. (hulled barley).

The charred seeds, etc. are typical of medieval settlements in the region, with free-threshing wheat and hulled barley apparently the main crops. The absence of rye is consistent with the relative unimportance of this crop in the region.

Very little can be said about the charcoal other than that both *Prunus* sp. (sloe, etc.) and *Quercus* sp. (oak) were probably used as fuel.

*Stone by DAVID WILLIAMS and NICOLA POWELL*

Twenty pieces of stone with a total weight of 2,412 gm. were collected during the excavation. The majority were found in Area A, with only three pieces from Area C. Most are chips and small fragments although there are two large pieces of quern; one from pit 1033 (1090) and another from the top of pit 1022. All identified pieces came from medieval contexts. A full catalogue is in the archive.

*Clay pipe by PAUL CANNON and NICOLA POWELL*

Three pieces of clay pipe were found during the excavation in addition to two from the earlier evaluation. All but one piece are short lengths of stem. Part of a bowl with heel was found in ditch 1121 (1187). It is not well finished, with the joining seam clearly visible. The heel has the maker's mark 'S C' in serif stamped on it. This is probably the mark of Samuel Carter, part of a clay pipe manufacturing dynasty, who worked in Oxford and Banbury from 1856 to 1874. However, there were other makers with the same mark working locally. All of the clay pipe is listed in the archive.

*The coin by PAUL CANNON*

Edward III silver penny; Third/Florin coinage, class 4 (1344–51). Obverse: +EDWR ANGL DNS HYB; Roman 'N's reverse barred. Reverse: CIVITAS LONDON, Lombardic 'N's. London mint. From pit 2005, deposit 2056.

*Worked flint by STEVE FORD*

Three flint flakes were recovered, all from medieval contexts (2004, 3009 and 3035). These were not chronologically distinctive and can only be dated broadly to the Neolithic/Bronze Age period.

## CONCLUSIONS

The transition from Anglo-Saxon to Anglo-Norman and medieval England is a key period in the development of English society. The specific objectives of the project were to seek answers to questions concerning the date and nature of settlement on the site and, in particular, to address issues of continuity between the periods, as opposed to abandonment and re-use of the location. The excavation, albeit limited in extent, has provided a picture of intense but short-lived medieval occupation on the site. Although earlier material was present, no features could be dated earlier than the mid 11th century and even these need

not have been earlier than the 12th, while the main episode of occupation seems to have lasted only until the mid to late 13th century, although even some of the later material could have already been old when deposited, so a later end date is not ruled out.

Most of the evidence came from a series of intercut rubbish pits, although there was also evidence of a timber building of hall type and possibly a road surfacing episode. It is clear that the plot investigated was bounded by ditches, but the precise lines of these and the area of the plot could not be established mainly due to the frequency with which the ditches were truncated by pits. However, the plot appears to have been considerably larger than would be seen in an urban setting and it may have contained garden or paddock space as well as a residence. Space was clearly not unlimited as the successive recutting of rubbish pits in the same place time after time suggests some pressure on land use (?or just habit).

Potentially among the earliest features, pit 3029 could have been a late Saxon sunken-featured building but, on balance, this interpretation is not favoured and the earliest occupation is probably that associated with Building A.

Building A, allowing that its identification and dating are both tentative, is interesting in a number of respects. First, its location: it was set at the rear of the plot defined by ditches 500 and 600, well back from the road, although roughly parallel to it, and its likely entrance, facing south-east, would have been turned away from the road. The area between the 'hall' and the road was very busily used, with large numbers of pits and quite a few minor gullies and ditches, but nothing, for example, resembling stock enclosures. Second, its form: if accurately represented, this seems unusual, especially for a timber construction, when a simple rectangle would be expected. However, it would be unwise to read too much into the apparent apsidal shape since the evidence is admittedly unsatisfactory. It would be possible to posit a single phase of rebuilding or reinforcement along the south wall. It is unclear how long this building stood. As its position was respected by features of all phases, it may have endured through the entire occupation of the site.

The possible medieval building fronting the road, identified through floor layers and a post setting in the evaluation, was not positively identified in the excavation trenches and, although some layers towards the road frontage could be interpreted as floor layers or more likely yard surfacing, these were all post-medieval.

Nothing in the finds assemblage suggest that this was a rich site. The pottery is overwhelmingly local and domestic, metalwork was rare and wholly utilitarian, with one exception (the strap distributor, see Metalwork above). Some smithing was clearly carried out on or near the site, although no smithing features were revealed. The inhabitants were also clearly involved in the processing of crops, the charred plant remains providing evidence for the stages of processing of grain both immediately prior to grinding and somewhat earlier (before the sorting of the grain from the weeds). The animal bones suggest a low-status consumption pattern, combined with evidence suggesting that horses were used for mixed farming purposes rather than specifically for riding. In addition, dogs were clearly permitted considerable freedom to scavange carcasses (and apparently, horse meat specifically was fed to dogs). The animals appear to have been bred locally.

All of this evidence is typical of low-status rural medieval settlements, showing a largely self-sufficient farming population, but is of added interest as it is the first such glimpse of the archaeology of medieval Brighthampton, allowing the status of the medieval settlement to be characterized for the first time and establishing a base for future work.

It is tempting, given the date of this short-lived phase of occupation, to relate it to the generally observed pattern of settlement expansion attributed to population growth in the 12th to 13th centuries. Over much of the country this was followed by contraction around

the turn of the 13th to 14th centuries. Here, however, the evidence is somewhat slim and the end date for the occupation is not securely established. Continuity into the 14th century remains possible.[19]

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[19] I. Kershaw, 'The Great Famine and Agrarian Crisis in England 1315–1322', *Past and Present*, 59 (1973), 18-19; C. Platt, *Medieval England, A Social History and Archaeology from the Conquest to AD 1600* (1978).